

REMARKS

Amendment to the Specification

Applicant requests replacement of the paragraph at page 19, lines 17 through 23 with the above amended paragraph. The amendment corrects a typographical error in which the word "exists" was inadvertently substituted for the word "exits." No new matter has been introduced by the amendment.

Rejection of Claims 1 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b), or (e)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b), or (e) as being anticipated by International Publication EP 0 926 162 A1 by Yanase, *et al.*, published on June 30, 1999 (herein referred to as "Yanase, *et al.*"). The Examiner states that Yanase discloses that water may be removed from a cohesive composition by halting agitation and removing the liquid or water in the absence of agitation by various methods and that there appears to be no significant difference between the reference and that which is claimed by the Applicant.

Yanase, *et al.*, teaches that

. . . drying (first step drying) of the hydrogel crosslinked polymer obtained by the polymerization is carried out in a static state until it becomes possible to disintegrate an aggregate as formed by aggregation of the polymer due to the drying . . .

(Yanase, *et al.*, at page 3, lines 24-28). The Yanase, *et al.*, polymerization product is provided directly to the first step drying for drying in a static state, and is not agitated prior to drying in a static state. In contrast, Claim 1 requires a step not taught by Yanase, *et al.*, that is, removing liquid from the hydrogel until the composition enters a cohesive phase and only then drying in a static state. Yanase, *et al.*, thus does not teach (a) agitating a composition while removing liquid until the composition enters a cohesive phase, (b) halting the agitation, and (c) removing liquid from the composition in the absence of agitation until the composition passes through a cohesive phase, as stated in present independent Claim 1 (upon which Claims 24-26 are dependent). Since Yanase, *et al.*, thus does not teach every element of Claims 1 and 24-26, the cited reference cannot anticipate those claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b), or (e).

In light of the above remarks, Applicant requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections of Claims 1 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b), and/or (e).

Rejection of Claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected Claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over International Publication EP 0 926 162 A1 by Yanase, *et al.*, published on June 30, 1999 (herein referred to as "Yanase, *et al.*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,380,456, issued on April 20, 2002, to Goldman (herein referred to as "Goldman"). The Examiner states that Yanase, *et al.*, discloses the removal of liquid from a composition in the static state (no agitation) as claimed by applicants except for the removal of liquid from the composition comprising a crosslinked poly(allylamine). The Examiner further states that Goldman discloses poly(allylamine) as a hydrogel. The Examiner then states that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the method of removing the water as noted in Yanase, *et al.*, from the hydrogel poly(allylamine) since Goldman discloses that poly(allylamine)s are hydrogels.

As discussed above, Yanase, *et al.*, teaches providing a polymerization product directly to a first step drying for drying in a static state and therefore does not teach first agitating a composition while removing liquid and then halting the agitation and removing liquid from the composition in the absence of agitation, as stated in Claim 32. Furthermore, Yanase, *et al.*, does not teach the removal of liquid from a specific composition comprising a cross-linked poly(allylamine) as stated in Claim 32. As a result, Yanase, *et al.*, does not teach or suggest the subject matter of Claim 32.

Like Yanase, *et al.*, Goldman does not teach or suggest agitating a composition while removing liquid, halting the agitation, and removing liquid from the composition in the absence of agitation. Since neither Yanase, *et al.*, nor Goldman, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests agitating a composition while removing liquid until the composition enters a cohesive phase before drying the composition in a static state, the combination of Yanase, *et al.*, with Goldman does not teach every element of Claim 32 and therefore the subject matter of Claim 32 is patentable over Yanase, *et al.*, in view of Goldman.

In addition, neither Yanase, *et al.*, nor Goldman, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the specific conditions stated in Claim 32 for the removal of liquid from a composition comprising a cross-linked poly(allylamine). For example, neither Yanase, *et al.*, nor Goldman, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a method wherein a composition is agitated at a

pressure, P1, about 65 to 160 mbar absolute and at a temperature, T1, about 60 to 70°C while removing liquid until the composition enters a cohesive phase and then agitation is halted, as stated in Claim 32. Nor does either reference teach or suggest the further step of removing liquid from the composition at a pressure, P2, less than about 60 mbar absolute and at a temperature, T2, less than about 60°C in the absence of agitation. Furthermore, neither Yanase, *et al.*, nor Goldman, alone or in combination, describes the removal of liquid from a composition comprising a cross-linked poly(allylamine) in the absence of agitation for at least 30 minutes.

Thus neither Yanase, *et al.*, nor Goldman, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the subject matter of Claim 32, and therefore the subject matter of present Claim 32 is nonobvious over Yanase, *et al.*, in view of Goldman. Therefore, Applicant requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of Claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Objection to Claims 2-23, 27-31, and 33-36


The Examiner objects to Claims 2-23, 27-31, and 33-36 for depending upon rejected Claims 1, 22-24, and 32. In view of the above remarks with respect to Claims 1, 22-24, and 32, Applicant requests withdrawal of the objection to Claims 2-23, 27-31, and 33-36.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicant believes that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 2 2003